THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) The Tapas Majumdar Committee recommendations were kept in view while finalising the requirements of funds for the implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which is the National programme for universalization of elementary education in the country by 2010.

(f) SSA is a nationally evolved and funded programme for universalization of elementary education. However, seeing the robustness of the programme, the European Commission have already committed an amount of 200 million Euros for funding of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) whereas World Bank and British Overseas Development Agency (ODA) are also interested in committing funds for support of the programme.

Development of co-operatives

*170. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government consider that the banking functions are an esential ingredient for the furtherance of the co-operative movement;

(b) if so, its possible impact on the co-operative movement; and

(c) whether wide ranging restrictions imposed on the co-operatives to launch and continue banking functions will affect the co-operatives and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): (a) and (b) Banking is the main economic activity undertaken by the credit co-operatives having membership strength of around 157 million (March, 2001).

(c) There are no restrictive provisions. Certain checks and balances have been built in by the Government and the Reserve Bank of India to regulate the affairs of the co-operative banks with the objective of safeguarding the interests of the members and the depositors.